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PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS NEEDED FOR THE PEACE CORPS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Since its inception in 1961, the Peace Corps has been asked by many developing nations to help solve their nearly insurmountable educational problems. Today, more than one-half of the 10,000 Volunteers in the Peace Corps are serving as teachers or school administrators in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Recognizing the need for professional teachers in these programs, the Peace Corps has worked closely with the National Educational Association in a continuing campaign to recruit experienced teachers for overseas service. Unfortunately, the response from American teachers has not been great enough to meet the overwhelming requests for Volunteers. Accordingly, the Peace Corps has assigned many college graduates without professional preparation to teaching positions, particularly at the elementary and secondary levels.

The professional teachers serving in the Peace Corps are providing guidance and direction for the inexperienced teachers, and they also are filling the more professionally demanding assignments, such as teacher training, curriculum development, administration and supervision, and university teaching.

TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS

The average Volunteer teacher spends between 20-30 hours in the classroom per week. Volunteers with light teaching loads usually become involved with adult literacy classes or regular academic subjects in adult

evening classes. Nearly all Volunteers teach some English at one time or another. Volunteer teachers are always selected and assigned according to their subject matter speciality and all teacher disciplines are presently being utilized by the Peace Corps.

Assignments will have some familiar problems--severely limited physical plants, crowded classrooms, insufficient equipment and cramped student quarters. There may also be sagging academic standards. Because some schools lack the funds for decent faculty salaries, teaching standards fluctuate greatly.

Many of the schools in which Volunteer teachers are working are relatively new. They were built in massive government school construction projects, sometimes with the help of Peace Corps Volunteers. Most are boarding schools with a couple of hundred students. Since education is so limited, only the brightest students from the villages in the area are allowed to enter. In many African nations, the schools are located on a compound with six or eight classrooms. The staff and the boarding students all live on the compound in separate quarters. This allows students who are having difficulties with their school work to receive extra help in the evenings.

TEACHER TRAINING

Experienced teachers with masters degrees will also be assigned to teacher training colleges that are similar to our old normal schools. In some countries, students entering these schools may have only 6-8 years of education. In others, they will have up to 12 years. Volunteers will have to draw on every facet of their training and experience to teach methods and other professional courses necessary to give students the skills and enthusiasm for effective teaching.

Other professional teachers will conduct on-the-job teacher training, working half-time as regular teachers and spending the remaining time teaching in-service training courses for fellow teachers. This would give the student teachers the opportunity to inject new methods, ideas, visual aids, etc. into their own classes.

Ideally, professional teachers in the Peace Corps will work themselves out of their jobs. It will take many years to accomplish this goal. Liberal arts graduates serving as teachers are helping to meet the tremendous teacher shortages in many nations, but if these countries are to develop good educational systems with effective professional teachers, they must have the help and guidance of the experienced teachers of the United States.

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Many newly independent nations are establishing colleges and universities to help meet the trained manpower needs of their country. Sending students outside their country has proved to be a slow and expensive way of meeting this need. Professional teachers with an advanced degree of two or more years of teaching experience are being requested to fill teaching positions in these new institutions. In most assignments, English will be the language used.

A Volunteer instructor at the University of Nigeria reported:

> The University now consists of some 20 buildings, with others under construction and with areas being cleared for more . . . Over 1,000 students and 150 faculty members and staff are working hard, organizing the University, molding its spirit, and conducting full-time classes. Many of the hopes of building this nation rest with the importance of its universities and with the highly selected students who are studying here and elsewhere to become the teachers, scientists, businessmen and artists of a new generation.
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> Volunteers are busy with teaching or research assignments. Some are lecturing in history, sociology,

> political science, English, economics and music; some are assisting in sociological studies of the surrounding villages; our agronomist is helping plan an experimental farm; our veterinarian is giving extension lectures in animal husbandry and conducting research on animal deaths at the Eastern Region cattle ranch; some are teaching federal employees here for a special training in secretarial studies and office management; two are helping the local District officer take a census; and over twenty are conducting night classes in English language and literature, economics, geography and mathematics for the university junior staff. We are all becoming involved in the informal work and enjoyment which helps discipline and organize a functioning university.

ADMINISTRATION

In many newly formed schools, the staff is unfamiliar with basic school policy, scheduling, discipline, etc. Many things the American teacher accepts and expects will be missing in his host country school. Because of this, some professional teachers are serving in supervisory positions as principals or vice-principals, while others serve without a title.

One teacher in an African school soon realized the inadequacies of the testing methods used by host country teachers. The students' grade relied completely on an essay test given at the end of each term. To better evaluate the students' progress, the "objective" test was introduced. It was something entirely new to the host country teachers, so time had to be spent teaching the staff how to write it, when to use it and where it could be used most effectively.

TRAINING FOR OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENTS

Training will be held for 10 weeks at a university in the United States. Training will be intensive, with a considerable amount of time devoted to language study. In addition to courses on the educational system and teaching methods in their country of assignment, trainees will

study its history, culture, geography, economy and government. A course on World Affairs will be taught with special focus on recent developments in that region of the world. Trainees will also be given a refresher course in American history, government and culture. Courses in first aid, preventive medicine, and physical conditioning will also be included.

Upon completion of the 10-12 week training program, trainees will be selected for overseas service.

HOW TO APPLY FOR PEACE CORPS SERVICE

All applicants for Peace Corps service must submit a Peace Corps Questionnaire, which can be obtained at Post Offices, from college Peace Corps Liaison Officers, or by writing: Peace Corps, Washington, D. C. 20525. The submission of a Questionnaire is not a commitment to enter the Peace Corps. If a candidate is selected to enter a training program, an invitation is issued. The invitation can be accepted or turned down--or the candidate can ask to be considered for an alternative assignment at another time or in another country.

LIFE IN THE PEACE CORPS

Assignments in Peace Corps educational programs are available throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America. A teacher who has a special interest in a specific area and type of assignment should definitely indicate this on his Questionnaire. The Peace Corps will do everything possible to meet the desires and concerns of all applicants if they meet the requirements for such specific programs.

All travel expenses will be paid by the Peace Corps, whether you are headed for the mountains of Peru or the islands of the Philippines. There will be an opportunity to see other parts of the world.

While you are overseas, a living allowance will be given you for food, clothing, housing and incidental expenses. Medical care also will be provided.

The amount of the living allowance will be bases on the experience of the Volunteers currently in the country of your assignment. It will be adequate to provide modest but healthful living conditions.

There are many misconceptions about how Volunteers live overseas. Professional teachers will live at a level similar to host country teachers. Teachers in most every developing nation have better than average living conditions. Because most modern conveniences are not available outside of most cities, Volunteers sometimes employ domestic help for laundry, cleaning, etc. Some governments supply domestic help for all Volunteers so that they will have more time for preparation, class work and adult evening sessions.

During service, Volunteers receive 10 days of home leave before departure overseas and 45 days of vacation while serving. Vacation leaves are normally taken during the summer, with the remaining portion of the school vacation being spent in various productive activities, from summer classes to road building. All host country holidays during the school year are observed by Volunteer teachers.

Married couples may serve together if both qualify for the same country and have no dependents under 18. It is not necessary for both husband and wife to be teachers. Many overseas programs are diverse enough to allow assignment of couples with completely different skills.

At conclusion of service, all Volunteers receive $1,800, less taxes--money that has accumulated at the rate of $75 for each month of satisfactory Peace Corps service. The termination allowance is the same for

all Volunteers regardless of assignment overseas or experience before Peace Corps service. When you return, letters from your foreign students and occasional lapses into your second language will remind you of your sojourn abroad.

Your own personal experiences will constitute one of the most valuable aspect of the two years. Confronted with a different and fascinating culture, you will become acquainted with different ways of living, with new and perhaps better ways of teaching. You'll discover more about your own potential for understanding others.

The fact that Peace Corps Volunteers are teaching in countries overseas is evidence that these nations are determined to improve and expand educational systems. Young nations striving to keep pace with rapid changes in technology and science and young people thirsty for the knowledge which will afford them productive places in their society need the help you can give as a professional teacher.

"These nations have entrusted to us their most precious raw material. The future of the free world begins in their classrooms today, because we are teaching the leaders of tomorrow," said a Volunteer in Africa.

An experienced teacher has much to offer world education. With the experienced teacher, progress will be slow; but without him, progress will be much slower. Think about it.

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